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RETHINKING ISLAM: INSPIRING QUR'AN FOR CONDUCTING SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

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Abstract

For the Muslim community, Qur'an is a mother of all resources, not only in the ritual aspect but also in another aspect of Muslim life, including sciences. For them, science that contradicts the Qur'anic teaching is misleading, and we have to avoid it. So that, in developing science Muslims can't be far away from the holy Qur'an. This article aimed to describe the importance of the Qur'an as an inspiration for research in developing sciences in this nowadays and explain the steps of making the Qur'an as inspiration for Muslims in scientific development. It's hoped it can contribute to developing researches on Science from Qur'anic perspective.

Keywords: Rethinking, Qur'an, Inspiring, science, research, Islamic sciences.

Introduction

Integrity between religion and science is an extraordinary blessing that owned by Islam (Masood, 2017). Unlike other religions, there is no conflict between science and religion in Islam (Al-Madni, 2013). Fourteen centuries ago, Allah (SWT) sent down the Qur'an to humankind as a book of guidance. Today, as the word of God, the Qur'an has shown many miraculous attributes proving that it is a revelation from God (La'li, 2007). One of these attributes is the fact that several scientific truths that we have only been able to uncover by the technology of the 20th century were stated in the Qur'an 1,400 years ago (Ahmed, 2010). This article aims to describe the method of research in sciences inspired by the Holy Qur'an.

Zakir Naik (2007) states that the Qur'an is not a book of science but a book of signs. There are more than six thousand 'signs' in the Qur'an, of which more than a thousand deal with science. In his study to attitude verses toward science, Khalil (1991) mentioned four categories that cover its attitude towards science; 1) matters related to the reality, horizons, and aims of science; 2) the methodology of discovering scientific facts; 3) the laws that apply in various fields of science; 4) those laws found through the experimental methods and meant to be used by a person in his/her capacity, with the task of creating a higher and better life and more beautiful world. It implies that Qur'an has everything needed to develop science and technology (Guessoum, 2008).

As a book of the sign, Qur'an contains codes that need to explore through studies and research in many disciplines (Naik, 2007), such as astronomy, physics, geography, oceanology, biology, botany, zoology, medicine, psychology, embryology, and another general science. It means that to understand all such verses of the Qur'an, required to have a comprehensive knowledge embracing many scientific disciplines (Masood, 2017). Qur'an has given many

resources to developing science and technology, which influenced Muslims' scientific achievements and researches (Khir, 2000). Qur'an should be inspiring resources to Muslim scientists (Salleh & Baharuddin, 2011).

Scientific miracle of the Qur'an

A miracle is a particular sign from God that transcends the bare facts of the case and communicates a spiritual message (Sulmasy, 2007). In the Qur'an case, many scientists have examined the Qur'anic revelation and found that Qur'an has a scientific miracle. Many scientists found that the Qur'an deals with many subjects of interest to science, and the Qur'an did not contain a single statement that was assailable from a modern scientific point of view (Khir, 2000; Sayska & Arni, 2016; Yahya, 1994). Nuclear Scientist, Sultan Bashir Mahmood (2010), writes in his book that the miraculous of the Qur'an may be judged by its profound influence on the lives of its believers and the unrivaled impact it had on culture, science and technology latter on. Even the developments of western social institutions, welfare philosophy, science, and technology are also indebted to the Qur'an, as it inherited them from the Muslims (I. Faruqi, 1986; Masud & Salvatore, 2009). Outside from opinion and finding research of many scientists, Qur'an has mentioned that:

"Here is a message for mankind: Let them take a warning from there, And let them know that He is (no other than) One Allah: Let men of understanding take heed" (Q.S. 14: 52)

This holy book is a perfect clarification to the human being, and they can take a lesson from this book. As the primary source of the Islamic faith, this book believed by its followers, the Muslims, to be complete of divine origin (Lawrence, 2014). It contains guidance for all humankind. So, the message of the Qur'an should be relevant to every age and every time. Today, from the founding of much research, Qur'an has proved its miracle. Many scientists have confirmed the scientific miracle of the Qur'an. There is compatibility between the Qur'anic text and the data of modern science (Khalil, 1991).

In this recent century, there has many studies and researches inspired by scientific verses of the Qur'an. In social science, for example, Hasan, from his discussion on the social phenomenon and the understanding of social events from Qur'anic verses, has led founding to at least three things. First, the Qur'an provides information about the nature and character of social life in the past. Second, it improves human metaphysical knowledge associated with the creation and evolution of social problems. Third, it helps to formulate and discover universal laws (Hassan, 2014).

In explaining the social phenomenon, Qur'an uses several allegories. As research conduct by Haris (2013) found that Qur'an uses several parables with a particular reason, such as to make people comprehend religious facts and divine concepts because the Qur'an is a book that sent down for all humankind at any level of thought and knowledge.

From the medical aspect, we can see several researches that found the beauty, elegance, and precision of the Qur'an. Saki (Saki et al., 2014) studied scientific resources related to the effect of herbs, namely ginger, date palm, grape, and olive, which shows that these plants have useful and beneficial pharmaceutical effects in the treatment of metabolic diseases and problems that the modern science. He found the method of treating them in the last decades or still is unable to address them. Another research conduct by Azarpuour (2014) about medicinal

plants found that the Holy Qur'an as the essential Islamic reference has a collection of medicinal plants that characterized somewhat unclear in modern medicine. Still, valuable evidence obtained from Islamic texts and tradition⁴ or a folk medicine. Results showed that 19 medicinal plants identified in the Qur'an. It presumed that references of the Qur'an medicine to herbs mentioned in Qur'an have special pharmaceutical effects that human possibly has proved special pharmaceutical effects of these plants by inspiring from this source. As new advances in technology and medicine continue to grow at an exponential rate today, there is time to reflect and appreciate the Islamic contribution to medicine. It is for this reason that the discoveries and medical revelations in Qur'an should not be ignored or forgotten (Loukas et al., 2010).

Although not explained detailedly, some other researchers also use Qur'an as inspiring resources research in their scientific discipline. Rezaeitalarposhti's (2013) study about psychology from an Islamic perspective; Ghafouri-Fard and Akrami (2011) study about man evolution from an Islamic point of view.

Create Qur'an for development in science and technology

Islam as civilization has experienced to flourish in the 8th century A.D. At that time, Islam has become the forefront in science (Hodgson, 1974). During the period, there many Muslim scientists revealed. Abu Raihan Biruni as the expert of philosophy, physics, maths, and astronomy of Persia. Avicenna, who is a famous, influential polymath. Alghazali, with the tendency towards religious sciences and philosophy, and other scholars from the Middle East altogether, made the golden age of Islam (Kennedy, 1983). Muslims should have the passion for taking hold of glory civilization, not just look that past glories sentimentally. They should determine their vision for the future, that they can regain their position at the forefront of Science (Sardar, 2002).

As a source of the wellspring, Qur'an can become a source of science without dryness. Perhaps we need to contemplate the words of al-Jauhari, that quoted and translated by Hasan and Tua³ (2014),

"Why are there thousands of fiqh scholars, and why have so many fiqh books been written even though the verses regarding Fiqh are not more than 150? Why have too many written on Fiqh, while too few have written on the science of nature? Even though every surah has verses regarding it?"

Al-Jauhari mentioned that there are 750 verses regarding science, and only 150 regarding Fiqh (Jawhari, 1900). This show that there is no reason for Muslim scientist ignoring Qur'an as inspired resources in their articles, studies, or researches. Verses of the Qur'an should be encouraging to the researcher to formulating a problem and finding progress on technology. We can see at surah that it talks about the prophecy of Sulaiman. There is Spy technology called Hud-Hud that can transfer news fastly (27:22); sophisticated transportation technology to bring material just in a second time (27:40); heavy metal technology (21:80, 34:12); construction and architecture technology (34:13; 38:37; 27:22), communication technology (27:17), etc. From that sample of scientific verses, then we going to think about why we cannot regain our position at the forefront of science today? ¹

As study conduct by Faruqi (2006) shows that Muslim scholars played an essential role in the development of scientific thinking in the Middle Ages. It argued that the Muslims were not just the preservers of the ancient and Greek knowledge, but that they contributed original

works to the different fields of Science (Hobson & Hobson, 2004). They inspired by the Islamic view of nature; that is, humankind had a duty to study nature to discover God and to use quality for the benefit of humanity. This knowledge was transferred to Western Europe and subsequently played an important role in revitalizing a climate of learning and exploration in Europe, leading to the Renaissance in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Saliba, 2007).

Step of rethinking qur'an for scientific research

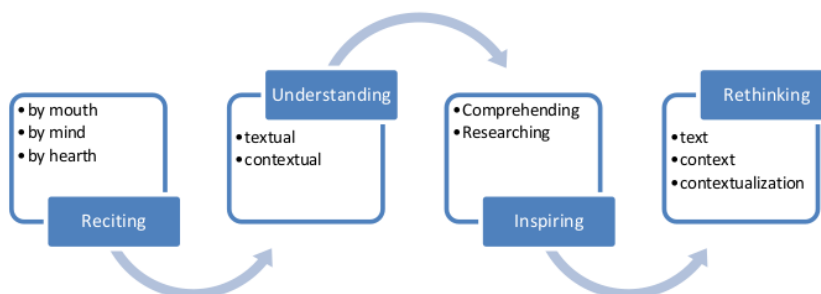


Figure 1. Step of rethinking Islam.

Step 1: Reciting

From a theological perspective reciting Qur'an is an act that very recommended for Muslims. There are some verses and hadiths that order Muslims to recite the Holy Qur'an every day because of it big reward (GAZALI, 2018). If a Muslim recites the Qur'an, although without understanding it, they will get the reward from Allah. Rasulullah SAW said in hadith:

From Abu Musa Al-Asy'ari said, the Prophet (ﷺ) said, "The example of him (a believer) who recites the Qur'an is like that of a citron which tastes good and smells good. And he (a believer) who does not recite the Qur'an is like a date which is good in taste but has no smell. And the example of a dissolute wicked person who recites the Qur'an is like the Raihana (sweet basil), which smells good but tastes bitter. And the example of a dissolute wicked person who does not recite the Qur'an is like the colocynth which tastes bitter and has no smell.." (Al-Bukhari, n.d.)

Therefore, reading the Qur'an becomes a tradition rooted in the Muslim community (Denny, 1989), and they believe that reading the Qur'an has many benefits, both for the benefit of the world and the hereafter. Many of the Muslims who read the Qur'an daily (Rasmussen, 2001) and many of them memorize it in their entirety by various methods (Al-Mosallam, 2013) because they believe that reading and memorizing the Qur'an brings significant benefits in life (Wirdanengsih, 2016). Some Muslims taught their children to read the Qur'an from an early age, from pre-school to college levels (Syarifuddin, 2004). Even many children with special needs also have traditions and memorize the Qur'an well (Mohamad et al., 2014).

This tradition of reading the Qur'an looks more lively during Ramadan (Rurin, 2018), every Muslim, both individually and in groups, competing to be able to read the Qur'an as a whole. Not a few of them can read it many times a month. All that done because they convinced that reading the Qur'an was an act of worship that would get a great reward for those who did it (Sofiah, 2018).

Al-Ghazali explained three ways to read the Qur'an to get a blessing. First, by word of mouth, someone reads the Qur'an appropriately according to the knowledge of recitation. Second, with reason, he understands the meaning and content of the readings according to the rules of the interpretation. In other words, understand the meaning of reading correctly. Third, with his heart, he takes lessons, feels, and lives the reading. After that, he did what he told and stayed away from what was forbidden (Saepuloh, 2019).

Step 2: Understanding

For Muslims reciting Qur'an is a common habit in their daily lives. Unfortunately, most of them stop at this step. Only a few among them who continue in the next step is to understand the Qur'an. Therefore, we do not be surprised if Al-Jauhari regretted that the verses of the Qur'an do not inspire Muslims, although the Qur'an was very evocative (Hasan & Tuah, 2014). Understanding Qur'an is the key to know the contents of it. If we read the Qur'an but do not understand, it is like a donkey carrying books on his back. Allah Said in the Qur'an:

Parable of those who read the Torah, then they are not carrying it like a donkey carrying books thick. It is a very bad metaphor that belies the verses of God. And Allah is not giving guidance to people who do wrong. (Q.S. Al-Jumu'ah verse 5).

Textually, the verse above addressed to the Jews. But in fact, it also applies to Muslims who do not understand the verses of the Qur'an even though they read it. Therefore, in reading the Qur'an, a Muslim should not stop only at the stage of reading but must be followed by an understanding, a step higher than reading.

Many Qur'anic verses tell us that we should understand the Qur'an carefully. Some Qur'anic verses remind us that we have to always think and meditate on the verses of Allah, the verses of Kauniyah, and verses of aqliyah. Allah said in surah Al-Hasyr verse 2:

If We had sent down this Qur'an upon a mountain, you would have seen it humbled and coming apart from fear of Allah. And these examples We present to the people that perhaps they will give thought. (Q.S. Al-Hasyr: 2)

Understanding the Qur'an can be done with a lot of methods. For Muslims who can't read the Arabic alphabet, then he can see the existing Qur'anic translations, both those issued by the Ministry of Religion and other legitimate translations. Whereas for Muslims having the ability of Arabic can be increased to a higher understanding, through the deepening of interpretations books and so on. To understand the Qur'an, Muslims can do textually or contextually (Martin, 1982). For verses of the Qur'an that have a definite meaning, a Muslim can understand them textually. However, to understand verses that are *mutasyabihat* or have multiple meanings, he can appreciate them contextually (Saeed, 2005).

Step 3: Inspiring

This step is an essential step to make the Qur'an benefit for scientific researches. Inspiring means are affecting someone or making you feel you want to do something. It also means causing you to feel confident about yourself or eager to learn or do something. In this context, inspiring means how to make the Qur'an inspiring reader do like what Qur'an tells them to do and take action. When a Muslim reads Qur'an without understanding, Qur'an will no function for his life.

On the contrary, when a Muslim read the Qur'an with knowledge, it will benefit him for his life and able to perform it in his daily life according to its guidance (Stowasser, 1996). Inspiring Qur'an means that a Muslim not only reading Qur'an but also curious to understand it more by doing scientific researches. For example, when the Qur'an says: "*why they do not see how the camel created and how the sky elevated...*(alghasyiyah: 17-18)" Muslim curiously to understand more these verses by researching camel and sky. Not only a camel but also another animal on the earth. If every Muslim does this step, Islamic science will go forward very fast because they conduct the researches not only because of science itself but also because of the religious order. If Muslims do this step, then the 750 verses of the Qur'an about science, as described above, will result in thousands of researches in science with a wide range of fields and branches.

Step 4: Rethinking

In the 80s, Arkoun initiated the importance of rethinking Islam (Arkoun, 1987), and this invitation continues more heard today so that the Islamic community understands the teachings of Islam well and contextually (Arkoun & Lee, 2019). This Islamic rethinking movement later followed by other Muslim thinkers such as Sardar (2002), Benjamin Soares in Africa (Soares, 2007), Yasim Arat in Turkey (Arat, 2016), and Nurcholish Madjid in Indonesia (Formichi, 2012). The essence of their Islamic rethinking thinking is that rethinking means that Muslims must not be satisfied with what he achieved from his research finding. He has to read Qur'anic verses, again and again, to get a new understanding of them. After getting a new agreement, he can continue to do further research on it. Rethinking also means efforts to develop research that has been accomplished in previous research by finding new ways and new approaches to science that they can be growing continuously. By this step, the development of science in Muslim communities will never stop, because there was no room for them to be quiet with no activity.

The process of rethinking Islam must start from the primary source of Islam itself, the Qur'an. By rethinking Islam, through the Qur'an, the Muslims will found new concepts in all fields of science. The sciences practiced by Muslims in various areas have been taken more from Western theories. So that they experience a dilemma (Ahmad, 2003): Muslims trapped in the vortex of Western science that has been integrated into their lives, making it difficult to get out of it. Likewise, in the field of education management. Almost nothing in our literature, scientific theories taken from the primary sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the Hadith. Yet in the two primary sources of Islam saved millions of theories that explain social, science, and technology. In the field of management, for example, the stories described in the Qur'an about the Prophet of Solomon, Joseph, Zulqarnain, and Luqman, contain many concepts that explain how to govern the country. It describes strategies to overcome poverty, strategies to educate children, and so on, which, if contextualized with the development of the present age, will provide extraordinary enlightenment for the development of the lives of Muslims following Islamic teachings (Panjwani, 2012).

Conclusion

After all, I conclude, there is no reason for Muslims only to wake up and make Qur'an as inspiration to enhance and develop new science and technology. It needs a unique explanation to be able to explain the subject of origin based on current science. The approach of scientific exegesis needs to be significantly improved regarding its methodology to make a

better understanding of the modern reader of the Qur'an or to make a new finding in science and technology.

Implementing the concept of rethinking, Muslim scholars have taken several approaches, such as reinterpreting the Qur'an or reviewing the interpretation of the Qur'an using various methods and procedures. Fazlur Rahman, for example, introduced the double movement hermeneutic approach. It emphasizes the awareness of the text, context, and contextualization (Sumantri, 2013). In this concept, understanding the Qur'an is not enough to just read it textually, but must also look at the historical context of the verse. If the historical context is understood, the next step is to contextualize its meaning with the present situation and conditions (Muttaqin, 2013).

Tantawi Aljauhari also introduces the tele-transference model in his interpretation of the Qur'an (Wafa, 2010). His interpretation book classified as a scientific interpretation and rational interpretation. Unfortunately, only view scholar who is concerned on scientific analysis is involved with the scientific approach. Other interpreters that concern to the scientific interpreters are Muhammad bin 'Umar bin Husain ar-Ra'az, Ahmad bin Mushthafa al-Marghi, Sayyid Muhammad Husain Thabâthabâi, and Muhammad Mahmûd al-Hijâzi (Wafa, 2010). But unfortunately, lately, seldom contemporary interpreters concerns with a scientific approach as their predecessors had begun. Some modern scientists, such as Harun Yahya, also give an extraordinary impression in the development of Islamic concepts about science (Yahya, 2001). His critique of Darwin's theory of evolution, an explanation of the creation of the human perspective of the Qur'an (Yahya, 2003), a description of the creation of nature (Yahya, 1999) and the concepts of other sciences he conceived, had quite an extraordinary impact on the development of the science of knowledge in the world Islam. However, other ideas relating to the social sciences, politics, culture, education, management, and so on, are still wide open to continue to be developed to produce new concepts following Islamic principles. Therefore, rethinking Islam needs to be encouraged again to make Islamic concepts stored in the Qur'an can be implemented in contextual form.

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